Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph C. Szabo Prepared Remarks Second Right-of-Way Fatality and Trespass Prevention Workshop St. Louis, Missouri August, 14, 2012

Good morning, everyone.

John, we appreciate your support. And Ron, thank you for the warm welcome.

At the FRA, safety is more than our highest priority – we live and breathe it.

So I'm honored to join a group today that reflects those core values.

And on behalf of President Obama and Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, let me thank you for dedicating yourselves to saving lives and making communities safer.

For the next two-and-a-half days, your experiences, your perspectives, and your talents will all be called upon to combat the leading cause of rail-related fatalities: Trespassing on railroad property and along transit, commuter, and freight rail rights-of-way.

Every day in America someone dies due to rail trespassing.

Nationally, that's more than 500 deaths per year.

And, as I'm sure all of you know, virtually all of these deaths are preventable.

Rail trespassers are most often pedestrians who walk across or along railroad tracks as a shortcut.

Some are engaged in recreational activities – from exercising to hunting to off-roading.

Some are loitering, or engaged in theft or vandalism.

In other words, trespassing behavior takes many forms.

And a one-size-fits-all solution to the problem is unlikely.

But right here – in this room full of people ready to devote three days to learning, to sharing, and to making their voices heard – we have the foundation we need: community.

That's where our efforts start.

Because issues related to trespassing are not exclusive to individual railroads and railroaders — or to regions, cities and towns.

The issues affect everyone.

And *everyone* needs to take responsibility.

Let me give you an example of how that's happening.

In West Palm Beach, Florida, the FRA has funded a groundbreaking trespassing prevention research study on Tri-Rail and Florida East Coast Railway Company (FEC) right-of-ways.

The Trespassing Prevention Research Study is evaluating a trespass prevention program first implemented by Transport Canada.

The goal is to develop a set of national recommendations for preventing trespassing.

And the program is called the Community, Analysis, Response, and Evaluation guide – or CARE guide.

Community. Analysis. Response. Evaluation.

CARE proceeds in that order.

So identifying your stakeholders, your community – that's Step One.

In West Palm Beach, that means a broad partnership including the FRA, Tri-Rail, FEC, Amtrak, CSX, Florida DOT, Operation Lifesaver, the West Palm Beach Mayor's Office, the police department, the planning and zoning department, and local schools.

Step Two is analysis.

And thanks to important changes made to how trespasser deaths are reported, our analysis can now potentially lead to a more effective "response" and "evaluation" — Steps Three and Four.

Before changes were made to FRA's accident and reporting requirements, railroads were required to identify trespasser deaths by county.

Now, railroads are required to report the actual geographic location of where the incident occurred.

As a result, we're obtaining much clearer data.

And with it, we are seeking to identify high-risk zones that warrant the use of longstanding prevention activities.

Identifying high-risk zones enables communities to develop localized mitigation strategies.

Those might include engineering reviews to better secure railroad property and deter illegal trespassing; educational outreach; or targeted enforcement of trespass laws.

More precise data can also help the FRA and our partners to better target our public awareness activities.

In 2008, the FRA issued a report that sought to develop a demographic profile for railroad trespassers.

The report used three years of reported trespasser fatalities.

Medical examiners and coroners across the country were surveyed.

And based on the best available information from those who participated, the average trespasser was determined to be a 38-year-old white male under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

But early this year, we began a new demographic study – this one analyzing five years of data.

And if this study yields similar results to the first, we can create an outreach campaign specifically targeted toward that demographic.

Meanwhile, we'll continue working to help freight and passenger railroads, rail labor organizations, Operation Lifesaver, and others to bring our trespass prevention outreach to a diverse audience.

FRA's partners extend throughout the rail industry; to state and local governments; to state DOTs; and to law enforcement agencies.

And there's no turning back – we have to keep looking forward.

Because the fact is, rail is the growth mode of the future — and it has a vital role to play in securing America's economic future.

No economy will ever grow faster than its transportation network can carry it.

And looking ahead, the United States faces tremendous challenges posed by our rate of growth.

By 2050, our country will be home to more than 100 million more Americans - a population increase that will require our freight network to haul four billion more annual tons of freight.

To prepare our country for this future — to respond to transportation network congestion that today costs our economy nearly a \$130 billion a year — organizations ranging from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to the American Road & Transportation Builders Association all agree: The future of American transportation is multi-modal.

And to meet these challenges, rail — the most cost-effective, least oil-reliant, most environmentally-friendly mode of transportation — will have to play a much larger role in moving people and goods than it does today.

Simply put, rail's efficiencies can't be ignored.

Two railroad tracks can carry as many passengers per hour as 16 lanes of freeway.

And since the early 1980s, our freight rail network has managed the amazing feat of doubling its haul without increasing its total fuel consumption.

As a result, a freight train today can move a ton of freight close to 500 miles on a single gallon of fuel.

So, more freight rail, more high-speed and higher-performing intercity passenger rail, this is the future.

And across the country, with record levels of federal investments in our rail network — with passenger service expanding and freight levels growing — the risk for more trespass-related incidents grows.

So it will take action on all of our parts.

Together, we can make trespassing socially unacceptable in every community.

We can continue spreading a simple message that, any time you trespass, you are literally risking your life.

So as committed as you are to trespassing issues now, I challenge you to become even more committed.

And as much as you care now, I urge you to care even more.

Continue seeking partnerships.

Continue educating anyone who will listen to always expect a train.

And during this workshop and beyond, make your voices heard.

It starts with a community.

It starts with care.

Thank you.